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ABSTRACT

Designed to follow up a 1981 survey, this study assessed the usage of instructional television (ITV) in the public schools of Maryland and compared current usage with that of the 1980-81 school year. Separate questionnaires were designed for teachers, library media specialists, principals, and ITV coordinators and sent to a sample of 209 schools. A total of 1,487 questionnaires were distributed; 956 were returned for a response rate of 64.3%. Data for this study consists of responses from a sample of 618 classroom teachers, 149 library media specialists, 166 school principals, and 23 system ITV coordinators. Analysis of the data indicates that: (1) ITV continues to be widely available in all Maryland public schools; (2) the most serious problem related to availability continues to be scheduling; (3) a commitment to ITV exists as shown by the increase in ITV equipment and facilities during the past 3 years; and (4) the attitudes of teachers and administrators toward ITV is generally positive. Two references and several data tables are provided. (JB)

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THE 1983-84 MARYLAND ITV
UTILIZATION STUDY SUMMARY REPORT

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

A research project as large as the 1983-84 Maryland ITV Utilization Study is not possible without the help of a dedicated research team. I am deeply grateful to a large number of people who gave most unselfishly of their time, talents and energy. The project's assistant director, Ms. Ann B. O'Neill, supervised the staff, oversaw daily operations, edited the final draft, administered the budget and completed a host of other essential activities. She deserves a great deal of credit for the successful completion of the project. Ms. Barbara Haase worked upon mailings, tabulation and key punching data. Her dedication and efficiency deserve the highest praise; we all agree that the study could not have been done without her. Dr. Robert B. Wall served as project consultant for sampling procedures and data analysis. His services were constant and essential to the project. He worked tirelessly and in the highest professional manner.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

BACKGROUND

In November of 1983, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Instructional Television, requested that we undertake a study to determine the present usage of instructional television within the public schools of Maryland. One such study had been conducted by Johnson and Keller in 1981. Essentially, the proposed study would replicate and update the Johnson and Keller study. We were very pleased to conduct this study since, to a large extent, the objectives of the study coincided with our own interests in the utilization of television in Maryland public schools. In January of 1984, we prepared a proposal for the study which was subsequently approved by Maryland Instructional Television (MITV) and by the Council for Statewide Planning of Educational Information Systems (CSPEIS). The study was conducted during the spring of 1984. It was essentially a sample survey, utilizing mailed questionnaires. Data collection was completed for the project by late May in 1984 for all Maryland school systems except one.¹ Final data collection was completed by November 1984.

PURPOSE

The study's purpose was to determine the present usage of ITV in the public schools of Maryland. As with the Johnson and Keller study, data was collected relevant to four questions:

1. To what extent is ITV available in the Maryland public schools?
2. To what extent are teachers, principals, library media specialists and system ITV coordinators committed to the area of ITV?
3. To what extent is ITV actually used in Maryland public schools?
4. In general, what attitudes toward ITV are held by teachers, principals, library media specialists, and system ITV coordinators?

¹ One county (Montgomery) requested that data collection from principals and teachers be delayed until September 1984. Data collection from these individuals was completed by late November 1984.

RELATED STUDIES

A comprehensive national study regarding the utilization of television in the public schools was sponsored by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) in the 1976-1977 school year. The study was directed by Peter Dirr and Ron Pedone. The Dirr and Pedone study was representative of 12,000 school systems and 2,275,000 classrooms. The results indicated that instructional television was used by one out of every three teachers and that approximately fifteen million students received a regular portion of their instruction via television. While the results of this study were highly significant in terms of national usage, it provided limited benefits to assist in planning at the state level.

In order to provide more data specific to the utilization of instructional television within Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Instructional Television, sponsored a statewide survey in 1981. The first Maryland ITV study was directed by Kerry Johnson and Paul Keller and was modeled after the Dirr and Pedone study. Like the national study, the Johnson and Keller study collected survey data relevant to availability, commitment, actual use, and attitudes toward ITV. The Maryland study utilized data collection questionnaires which were modifications of the instruments used in the national study. Johnson and Keller found that utilization of ITV in Maryland closely followed national trends. For example, they found that ITV was widely available in Maryland and that 42.4% of teachers used ITV in 1981. Other findings indicated that ITV had become an accepted feature of instruction in Maryland public schools.

METHOD

The present study replicated the Johnson and Keller study in order to assess the current status of ITV utilization in the public schools of Maryland and to compare current usage with that of the 1980-81 school year. In order to obtain results which would be comparable with the 1981 study, it was decided to design questionnaires which would closely follow those of the 1981 study. Design of the instruments followed three principles. (1) they must closely match those used in the 1981 study in order to obtain useful comparable results; (2) they should include items to collect data relevant to current needs of MSDE; (3) they should be streamlined to ensure ease and accuracy of response. With those in mind, we first determined what additional information was needed by MSDE and by ourselves and then designed items to collect such data.

Second, we reworked the instruments to ensure ease of response and to weed out ambiguous items. Effort was directed toward decreasing the time required to respond and toward improving accuracy of response. Since the 1981 study had not obtained usable data from school superintendents, it was decided that the instrument which had been used in 1981 should be redesigned and sent to system ITV coordinators. It was felt that the system coordinators would more likely be the ones with the needed information and that they would be willing to participate in the study. The subsequent return rate among ITV coordinators (96%) proved these assumptions to be true.

Separate questionnaires were designed for teachers, library media specialists, principals, and ITV coordinators. The questionnaires were organized around the four major study questions: availability of ITV, commitment to ITV, actual use of ITV, and attitudes toward ITV. The prototype questionnaires underwent informal field testing to identify problem items and ease of response. After the initial field testing, it was decided to use professionally printed and color-coded questionnaires that would be attractive and easy to complete. The design of the questionnaires was greatly helped by the fact that the instruments used in the Johnson and Keller study were suitable to be updated and refined.

SAMPLE

The population of this study included all public schools in Maryland. We were interested in obtaining results which would ensure representation of all systems and proportional representation of elementary, middle, and high schools. Consequently, we employed a variation of stratified random sampling which yielded a sample of 209 Maryland public schools. In each school selected, instruments were to be completed by the principal, the library media specialist, and five classroom teachers, the latter randomly selected by the principal. In addition, the ITV coordinator for each public school system received an instrument. The final sample selected was comprised of 24 ITV coordinators, 209 library media specialists, and 1,045 teachers.

ADMINISTRATION

In February of 1984, a letter was sent to each of the superintendents in the state explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their cooperation. The collection of data began with the mailing of letters to each school principal on April 13, 1984. The principals' letters explained the purposes of the study and detailed procedures which were to be followed when the questionnaires were mailed. Questionnaire packets and letters to the 209 principals were mailed during May 2-9, 1984. Each packet sent to the principals contained a principal's

questionnaire, a questionnaire for the library media specialist, and five questionnaires for classroom teachers. The packet included instructions for completing the questionnaires as well as the procedure to be followed in randomly selecting the classroom teachers. ITV coordinators received questionnaires and letters of explanation the week of May 17, 1984.

In order to increase the response rate of the study, a follow-up letter was sent June 5-7, 1984, to all schools which had not responded. A sample of the follow-up letter is included in Appendix I. Telephone follow-ups of those remaining, including ITV coordinators, were conducted from June 6 to 20, 1984.²

THE DATA

Data for this study consists of responses of a sample of 618 classroom teachers, 149 library media specialists, 166 school principals and 23 system ITV coordinators to their respective questionnaires.

The results of the questionnaire mailings and collection were:

	Questionnaires Sent	Questionnaires Returned	Questionnaires Returned (%)
System ITV Coordinators	24	23	95.8
Principals	209	166	79.4
Library Media Specialists	209	149	71.3
Classroom Teachers	1045	618	59.1
Total	1487	956	64.3

Analysis of the data consisted of categorization of responses by elementary, middle and high school levels. Percentages repending in each question category by level were calculated for each survey item.

²The schedule for Montgomery County principals and teachers was: questionnaire packet mailed - September 10; first follow-up - September 18; telephone follow-up - November 5.

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine the present usage of ITV in Maryland public schools. Data were collected relevant to four major indices of utilization: availability of ITV, commitment to ITV, use of ITV, and attitudes toward ITV. Data were collected from four categories of school personnel: teachers, principals, school library media specialists and system ITV coordinators.

AVAILABILITY OF ITV

The following results were obtained relevant to the availability of ITV in Maryland public schools:

89.0 percent of teachers, 98.8 percent of school library media specialists, 93.6 percent of principals and 100 percent of system ITV coordinators reported that ITV programming was available in their schools. ITV was most frequently available via on-air direct broadcast. Next in frequency was cassette-videotape, cable TV, and closed circuit TV. Less than 5 percent of schools reported having or using videodisc equipment.

Closely related to the availability of ITV is the availability of television sets for classroom use. 83.7 percent of teachers reported that it was "easy" or "pretty easy" to have access to a TV set. Sets were reported to be in good repair "always" or "most of the time" by 87.8 percent of teachers, 92.8 percent of school library media specialists and 91.9 percent of principals. The quality of television reception was reported to be "good" or "fair" by 91.1 percent of teachers, and by 92.4 percent of principals.

Scheduling of ITV programs was reported to be the most serious difficulty in using ITV. When asked about the degree of difficulty in obtaining a video recording (to overcome the scheduling problem), teachers responded as shown:

VIDEO RECORDING DIFFICULTIES

Easy	19.0
Pretty Easy	24.6
Sometimes Can't	9.9
Not Easy	8.0
Never Tried	26.0
No Facilities	11.9

When asked about the specific difficulties in using ITV, the group surveyed reported as shown:

DIFFICULTIES IN USING ITV

Program Scheduling	39.9
Set Availability	14.8
Advance Program Notice	9.5
Set Quality	8.7
Enough Planning Time	6.9
Set Maintenance	3.9
Set in Class	3.3
Schedule/Guide Availability	2.8
Program Quality	2.2
Availability of Assistance	1.1
Others	6.9

COMMITMENT TO ITV

The following results were obtained which were relevant to the question of the extent to which teachers, principals, school library media specialists and system ITV coordinators were committed to the use of ITV.

One indication of commitment used in the questionnaire was whether or not schools had designated someone as the ITV coordinator. We found that principals and teachers disagreed somewhat on this question. When we asked if there was a building person responsible for ITV, the following results were obtained:

BUILDING ITV COORDINATOR AVAILABLE

	Teachers	Principals
Full Time	20.4	31.4
Part Time	12.8	20.6
Informal	26.5	24.5
None	40.4	20.8

Of those schools which reported having an ITV coordinator, teachers reported that the following services were provided:

ITV COORDINATOR SERVICES

	Teachers
Distributes Guides/Schedules	2.6
Works with Students	16.1
Provides Training/Consultation	19.4
Provides Newsletter	25.8
Calls Attention to Program	38.7
Provides Equipment Assistance	74.2

Systems ITV coordinators were asked to report upon the upgrading or expansion of ITV facilities in their respective systems. Coordinators were asked what had been done during the past three years, as well as what was planned for the next three years. The following data were reported:

ITV FACILITIES UPGRADING

	Done in Past 3 Years	Planned for Next 3 Years
Increased the number of TV sets	46.6	43.4
Added Video Equipment	73.9	52.1
Expanded Videotape Libraries	73.9	52.1
Added Master Antenna	39.1	30.4
Added Production Equipment	47.8	30.4
Added Videodisc Equipment	0.0	8.7

USE OF ITV

The study asked teachers to respond to several items in order to determine how and to what extent ITV was used. Teachers reported that they frequently view ITV as a whole class (74.9 percent), but that it is also very common (77.9 percent) to view ITV with another class.

When asked how much time they spend watching ITV, 52.8 percent of all teachers reported watching at least 1/4 hour of ITV each week. 58.9 percent of elementary, 41.3 percent of middle and 43.4 percent of high school teachers reported watching at least 1/4 hours per week. Most teachers (87.6%) felt the maximum appropriate time for viewing ITV was between 1/2 hour and four hours per week. When teachers were asked about student outcomes which they would attribute to ITV, the following results were obtained:

TEACHERS' REPORT OF OBSERVED ITV OUTCOMES

Expanded Knowledge	48.3
Expanded Vocabulary	37.7
Students Follow-Up Ideas	45.3
More Enthusiastic About School	23.2
Use Library More	17.1
Watch More ITV at Home	27.1
Calming Effect	46.6
Others	3.9

When asked to which types of students ITV was most useful, teachers reported that ITV was most useful to all students (79.0 percent) rather than for special abilities students.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ITV

Teachers, principals and school library media specialists were asked how they perceived the general attitudes of other groups toward ITV. The following results were obtained:

TEACHERS

	Favor	Neutral	Against
Students	68.1	31.7	0.2
School Library Media Specialists	67.1	32.1	0.8
Other Teachers	48.5	50.3	1.2
System Office	40.6	57.3	2.1
Chairs/Subject Specialists	39.6	59.7	0.7
Other Specialists	31.2	67.9	0.9
Parents	24.0	70.2	5.8

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

	Favor	Neutral	Against
Students	68.1	31.7	0.2
Teachers	66.9	32.4	0.7
Principals	61.9	35.1	3.0
Chairs/Subject Specialists	52.2	46.8	1.0
Other Specialists	46.4	53.6	0.0
Teachers' Organizations	43.0	57.0	0.0
Parents	25.9	74.1	0.0

PRINCIPALS

	Favor	Neutral	Against
School Library Media Specialists	76.0	23.9	0.0
Teachers	63.8	36.2	0.0
Subject Specialists	53.2	46.8	0.0
Students	62.-	37.5	0.0
Other Specialists	43.4	55.8	0.8
Teachers' Organizations	39.8	60.2	0.0
Parents	37.0	60.7	2.2

The three groups generally view the groups listed as being positive or neutral toward the use of ITV.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the results of this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. ITV continues to be widely available in all Maryland public schools. While some differences in perception of availability occurred between principals, teachers, school library media specialists and systems ITV coordinators, it is clear that programing is available to more than 90 percent of all schools. In addition, television sets are available and most teachers feel that it is relatively easy to obtain a set for classroom use.

2. The most serious problem related to availability continues to be scheduling. Some hope to improving this condi-

tion lies in the increase in the availability of video recording equipment in individual schools.

3. There is a commitment to ITV as indicated by the increase in ITV equipment and facilities during the past three years as well as plans for increases during the next three years.

4. The perception of attitudes toward ITV is generally positive. Teachers, principals, and school library media specialists perceive that significant groups within the educational environment are either neutral or positive toward the use of ITV.

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